



Understanding Michigan's Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates

To comply with the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, Michigan moved to an accountability system in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn regular diplomas within four years of entering high school. This calculation meets the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact for the calculation of such rates. As more and more states implement the NGA standard, state-to-state comparisons will become more meaningful.

The formula for the calculation of 2010 graduation rates is possible because school districts have been tracking the enrollment of individual students since those students first enrolled in the ninth grade in the 2006-2007 school year and reporting those data to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). The gathering of this information at a statewide level allows CEPI to help districts track enrollments to reflect "transfers in" and "transfers out" of the districts, as well as students who exit from the public education system itself, over the course of four years.

Along with cohort four-year graduation and dropout rates, CEPI staff also calculates cohort five-year and cohort six-year rates. The following pages list the business rules and methodology used by CEPI and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to identify students as members of a graduation cohort and for the calculation of graduation and dropout rates.

The Cohort Four-Year Graduation and Dropout Rate

How is the 2010 cohort four-year graduation rate determined?

CEPI calculates the 2010 cohort four-year graduation rate by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in ninth grade in the 2006-2007 school year and then assigns these students to the 2010 cohort. Using the cohort method allows the state to more accurately track student movement over time. It accounts for students who leave school during one year and return in another, and it can account for students who are retained in a grade, but stay in school and graduate later than their classmates.

The total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth graders in fall 2006 formed the initial 2010 cohort. Students who transferred into the state, a district or a building at any time during the four-year period were added to the initial group. For students who moved within the public schools, CEPI updated student records to reflect the correct district and building location. These students were considered "transfers out" of the district/building they left and "transfers in" to the district/building they entered. Students who exited the public school system entirely (out of state, to non-public school, or home school) or became deceased at any time during the four-year period are considered "exempt" and removed from the cohort.

To calculate the 2010 cohort four-year graduation rate, CEPI staff places all students into one of four categories:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less
2. Other completer - earned a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age
3. Off-track continuing - did not complete high school in four years and is still continuing in school
4. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown*

*If exit status code 08 (transfer), 19 (continuing) or 42 (graduated from another district) is used, this usually does not count as a dropout. This is only given a dropout status if the student record is not reported by the new district (08), by the same district (19) or by the graduating district (42) in the subsequent collection. This indicates the student has a missing expected record (MER) and the whereabouts of the student are unknown.

Calculating the 2010 cohort four-year graduation rate

CEPI staff counts a student toward the graduation rate of the final building and/or district that the student attended during the four-year period. Staff counts "on-track graduated" as the numerator and divides by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2010 Cohort Total. Staff then includes students who transferred in as students with one of the four statuses for that building/district and students who transferred out in another public entity's rates, if the students have been located.

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated}}{\text{2010 Cohort Total}}$$

How is the 2010 cohort four-year dropout rate determined?

There is no national standard for calculating cohort four-year dropout rates. Michigan has chosen to maintain consistency by using the cohort methodology recommended by NGA to calculate this rate as well.

CEPI calculates the 2010 cohort four-year dropout rate by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in ninth grade in the 2006-2007 school year (assigned to the 2010 cohort) and left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period prior to receiving a regular diploma, GED or other completion certificate.

A dropout rate is not equivalent to subtracting the graduation rate from 100, percent because that method would count students who are "other completers" or "off-track continuing" as dropouts. Other completers are students who earned a GED, certificate, or reached special education maximum age. Students with an off-track continuing cohort status are those who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.

To calculate the 2010 cohort four-year dropout rate, CEPI staff places all students into the same four categories used to determine graduation rates: on-track graduated, other completer, off-track continuing, and dropout.

Calculating the 2010 cohort four-year dropout rate

CEPI counts "Dropouts" as the numerator and divides by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2010 Cohort Total:

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2010 Cohort Total}}$$

Some schools in Michigan offer ninth, ninth-10th, and ninth-11th grade campuses, from which students do not graduate, and thus, do not receive a four-year graduation rate. CEPI staff determines the cohort total for the buildings from which students do not graduate by the number of students who were reported at the building for two or more count days who may have transferred out of the building, but did not transfer out of the district by the time they were last reported. CEPI only computed this total for buildings where an authorized user did not report any graduates.

To help district authorized users calculate which building would be accountable for a student, relative to dropout rates, here are some examples where a student attended for at least two count dates:

- If "**Student A**" dropped out while attending a ninth-grade building, the authorized user would only include the student in this building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any 10th-12th-grade buildings.
- If "**Student B**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building, but eventually dropped out, the user would include this student in the 10th-12th building's dropout rates.
- If "**Student C**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building where the authorized user reported this student as off-track (graduated or continuing) or an other completer, the user would not include this student in any building's dropout rate, as this student did not dropout.
- If "**Student D**" transferred into the district to a 10th-12th-grade building and dropped out, the authorized user would only include this student in the 10th-12th-grade building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any ninth-grade buildings.
- If "**Student E**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building, transferred to another district and then dropped out, the previous district would not have this student included in the dropout rate, because this student is included in the new district's dropout rate.

Table 1

Dropout Rate Accountable Entity for Non-Graduating Buildings					
	Building	Cohort Status	Building	Cohort Status	Accountable Building
Student A	Ninth grade	Dropout	N/A	N/A	Ninth grade
Student B	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th-grade	Dropout	10th-12th-grade
Student C	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th-grade	Off-track (graduated or continuing) or Other Completer	10th-12th-grade
Student D	N/A	N/A	10th-12th-grade	Dropout	10th-12th-grade
Student E	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12 th -grade in another district	Dropout	10th-12th-grade in the other district

Understanding the 2010 cohort four-year graduation and dropout rate report

The 2010 cohort four-year graduation rate report contains buildings/districts when students are educated in any high school grades (ninth-12th) or when students' ages are 15 or older (i.e., students who are eligible to graduate from high school). There are two calculation rules that may result in building rates not summing to district rates and district rates not summing to state rates:

1. **Court-Ordered Facilities:** Buildings in which students who have been ordered by the court to attend are not included in the district's rate, only the building's rate.

2. **"Count Dates"**: Michigan collects data on students twice a year on "count dates" (one day in September and one in February) for the purposes of calculating state school aid payments and for required state and federal reporting. District authorized users report students in attendance on count day as continuing in the district during a fall or spring submission. Accommodations are made for students who do attend school but were absent on count day (e.g., if a child has an excused absence on count day, he/she must return within 30 school days; if an unexcused absence occurs, the student must return in 10 school days, etc.). In order to ensure that the graduation rate calculation aligns with MDE's full academic year requirement outlined in the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, students must be in attendance in a building for at least two count dates (consecutive or not) to be included in that building's calculation. Students must be in attendance at a district for at least one count date to be included in a district's calculations. Students who are enrolled, but did not attend on the count dates within the district are only counted in the state rate.

Count Dates Present	Accountability
0	State rate only
1	District and State
2 or more	Building, District and State

Reading the 2010 cohort four-year graduation and dropout rate report

The graduation and dropout rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate, or in which students are educated in any of the high school grades (ninth-12th) or when their ages are 15 or older (i.e., students who are eligible to drop out of high school). This report is divided into eleven columns. The columns include:

Table 21

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of local education agencies (LEAs), then public school academies (PSAs) and then intermediate school districts (ISDs). The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students do roll up into the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2006	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth-graders in fall 2006, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2010 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the four-year period and remained.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who exited the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out of state, to nonpublic school or to home-school). Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2010 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.

Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER: missing expected records).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a General Educational Development (GED) or other certificate or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated divided by the 2010 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2010 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

A cell containing "< 10" indicates there were zero or less than 10 total students in the cohort or in a status at the building for two count days or the district for one count day. It is possible to have "< 10" even though the first-time ninth-grader, transfers in, and transfers out columns have a zero total. This is due to the fact that cohort students now in the building/district for at least two count days are categorized as "exempt."

Four-Year Graduation Cohort Determination

Determining First-time Ninth Graders

After identifying current ninth-grade students from the most recent Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) data, CEPI staff locates these students for previous reporting in prior MSDS/SRSD submissions. If district users reported these students in grades lower than ninth grade or if CEPI staff members cannot locate them at all, then they are determined to be first-time ninth-graders. As the state of Michigan has no data on students before their arrivals, students who transfer into the state and whom Michigan school district authorized users reported as ninth-graders are deemed first-time ninth-graders, regardless of their statuses in their previous residences. Students who transfer into the state as 10th through 12th-graders are placed in the appropriate cohort as if they are on track for completion in four years, along with their classmates.

Calculating the Cohort Status

To calculate the cohort status, CEPI staff consider grade and exit status. Below is a chart of the exit status code definitions:

Table 3

Exit Status Code	Exit Status Definition	Cohort Status Category
01	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
02	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a degree-granting college or university	Graduated
03	Graduated from an alternative program with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
04	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a non-degree granting institution	Graduated

05	Completed general education with an equivalency certificate (GED)	Other Completer
06	Completed general education with other certificate	Other Completer
07	Dropped out of school	Dropout
08	Enrolled in another public school district in Michigan	If not located, Dropout; if located, Continuing in new district
09	Moved out of state	Exempt
10	Expelled from the school district (no further services)	Dropout
11	Enlisted in military or Job Corps prior to completion	Dropout
12	Deceased	Exempt
13	Incarcerated	Dropout
14	Enrolled in home school	Exempt
15	Enrolled in non-public school	Exempt
16	Unknown	Dropout
17	Placed in a recovery or rehabilitative program	Dropout
18	Left Adult Education	Dropout
19	Expected to continue in the same school district	On-track Continuing or Off-track Continuing, depending on Expected Graduation Year (EGY)
20	Received Special Education certificate of completion and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
21	Special Education - Reached maximum age and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
40	Graduated from a middle college with both a high school diploma and an associate degree or other advanced certificate	Graduated
41	Graduated from a middle college with only a high school diploma	Graduated
42	Graduated from another district	If not located, Dropout; if located, Graduate in new district

CEPI uses the most recently reported exit status by the primary education providing entity (PEPE) to designate a student as graduated, completed, continuing in school, dropout or exempt. CEPI staff considers six categories of students when determining cohort status:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate. The district user must report the student with a graduate exit status as of August 31 of his or her cohort year in order to be considered an on-track graduate.
2. Other completer - earned a GED, certificate or reached special education maximum age
3. Off-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years; or graduated from an early/middle college with a high school diploma only
4. Off-track continuing - did not complete high school in four years and is still continuing in school
5. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose

whereabouts are unknown

6. Exempt - transferred out of the public school system (out of state, to non-public school, or home-school) or is deceased

Table 4

Status	Corresponding Exit Status
On-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40 or 41
Other completer	5, 6, 20 or 21
Off-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40 or 41
Off-track continuing	19
Dropout (Reported & MER)	7, 8*, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19* or 42*
Exempt (transfer out)	9, 12, 14, 15 or residency codes: 4, 7, 8 or 15

* If exit status code 08, 19 or 42 is used, this usually does not count as a dropout. This is only given a dropout status if the student record is not reported by the new district (08), by the same district (19) or by the graduating district (42) in the subsequent collection. This indicates the student has a missing expected record (MER) and the whereabouts of the student are unknown.

Determining Accountable School and District

CEPI determines accountability based on the PEPE building and district in the MSDS. Additionally:

- If a student is reported in only one entity for a given MSDS collection cycle, then that district and building becomes the PEPE.
- If a student is reported in multiple entities in a collection, the entity which reported the greater proportion of full-time equated (FTE) membership is the PEPE.
- If the exit status for a student equals 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 20, 21, 40 or 41, this is considered a terminating exit status and PEPE is assigned to the entity in which the terminating exit status was reported.
- If the exit status for a student equals any other exit code other than those referenced above, PEPE remains with the last entity that reported the student as continuing.
- If PEPE can not be determined from multiple records, the record goes into "resolution" within the MSDS and a CEPI staff member will determine PEPE. Authorized users will utilize the previously accountable district/building's code until the staff member assigns the new PEPE.
- CEPI determines PEPE based on the fall, spring and end-of-year (EOY) general collections and the Student Record Maintenance Collection in the MSDS.
- When both a Unique Education Provider (UEP) and a school report a student, the school will be the PEPE for the student. However, if only a UEP (e.g., Career and Technical Education [CTE] entities and Michigan Math/Science Center buildings) reports a student, it will be the PEPE for the student.

Data validation and appeals process

CEPI provided the appeal window for district staff members to review and request changes to graduation and dropout information on individual students in the MSDS. From July through September 2010, districts' authorized users accessed the MSDS to view their cohort members and could request: 1) cohort status/year changes; 2) changes to district and building accountability (PEPE); and 3) linking of multiple students' Unique Identification Codes (UICs). CEPI staff members approved or denied these requests.

MSDS authorized users submitted exit status changes for students reported in the 2009-2010 school year in the Student Record Maintenance Collection. The ISD auditor had to submit exit status changes for any student reported in years prior to 2009-2010 as an audit finding. ISD auditors completed an exit status audit between October and the end of December 2010 in which they recorded any audit findings as an exit status change and modified the cohort status accordingly.

The Subgroup Report

Reading the 2010 cohort four-year subgroup report

Subgroups are divided into three categories, and are not mutually exclusive. These categories are:

1. Gender - males and females
2. Race - American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), Asian American, Black or African-American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H/PI), White, Hispanic or Latino, and Multiracial
3. Program eligibility - economically disadvantaged, limited English proficiency (LEP), migrant, and students with disabilities

The 2010 cohort four-year subgroup rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate, and is divided into ten columns. The columns include:

Table 5

Column Name	Column Definitions
District Name	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with the state and followed by districts included in the report.
Building Name	This is the alphabetical listing of the buildings that make up the district.
Subgroup*	Divided into three categories of gender, race and program eligibility.
2010 Cohort Total**	Total number of students in the 2010 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year cohort period or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER: missing expected records).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer	Total number of students who earned a General Educational Development (GED) or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated over 2010 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2010 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER: missing expected records).

* Subgroup determination for program eligibility is derived from the prior MSDS count date submission

** < 10 in a cell indicates that there were more than 0 and less than 10 students in the cohort or in a status at the building for two count days or the district for one count day.

The Cohort Five-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

CEPI staff calculated five-year graduation and dropout rates for students in the 2009 cohort. Staff members calculated the five-year graduation rate in the same manner as the four-year rate, including students who graduated in the fifth year (Off-track graduated) in the numerator. The staff counted "On-track graduated" and "Off-track graduated" as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track continuing, other completer, and dropout). Staff members accounted for transfers-in and out during that fifth year as well. The total of the status categories is the 2009 Cohort Total:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track Graduated}}{\text{2009 Cohort Total}}$$

CEPI calculated the five-year dropout rate in the same manner as the four-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their fifth year. Staff members accounted for transfers-in and out during that fifth year as well.

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2009 Cohort Total}}$$

A building or district's cohort five-year graduation and dropout rates could be greater than, less than or equal to the cohort four-year rates. There are three reasons for this discrepancy: 1) count dates; 2) the numerator changes; and 3) the denominator changes.

Count dates impact the discrepancy between the four-year and five-year rates. Students who, in their fifth year, now meet the minimum count dates will be included in that district's and/or building's rates. For example, if a 2009 cohort student was at a building for one count date in the 2008-2009 school year, that student was counted in the district rate only. If, in the student's fifth year, that off-track student attended for another count date in the same building, that student is now reflected in the denominator of the building's five-year rates.

According to the federal regulations released in October 2008, states cannot freeze cohorts. Once a cohort has graduated, the cohort total (the denominator used in the graduation and dropout rates) cannot be "locked" at that total. The cohort total must remain "open" to allow for accountability to be placed with the correct entity for students who attend high school beyond the fourth year. Below is a table demonstrating graduation and dropout rate change examples.

Table 6

Graduation and Dropout Rate Change Examples				
	4-Year Rate	5-Year Rate	Rate Change	Explanation
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)
	97%	99%	Increases	Off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year
	97%	95%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and are still continuing (increases the denominator)
Dropout Rate	5%	5%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)

	5%	7%	Increases	Off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year
	5%	3%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and did not drop out (increases the denominator) or former dropouts complete high school (decreases the numerator)

Reading the 2009 cohort five-year graduation and dropout rate report

The 2009 cohort five-year graduation and dropout rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate, and is divided into eleven columns. The columns include:

Table 7

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of LEAs, then PSAs, and then ISDs. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students do roll up into the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2005	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth- graders in fall 2005, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2009 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the five-year period and remained.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who exited the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out of state, to nonpublic school or to home-school) Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track + Off-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less, plus those who completed high school with a regular diploma in the fifth year.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the five-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER: missing expected records).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in five years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a General Educational Development (GED) or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated + Off-Track Graduated divided by the 2009 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in five years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2009 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

The Cohort Six-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

CEPI staff members calculated six-year graduation and dropout rates for students in the 2008 cohort for accountability purposes. Staff members calculate the six-year graduation rate in the same manner as the four-year rate, including students who graduated in the six year (Off-track +5 graduated) in the numerator. Staff counts "On-track graduated," "Off-track graduated" and "Off-track +5 graduated" as the numerator and divides by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track +5 graduated, off-track continuing, other completer and dropout). CEPI staff accounts for transfers-in and out during that sixth year as well. The total of the status categories is the 2008 Cohort Total:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track} +5 \text{ Graduated}}{\text{2008 Cohort Total}}$$

CEPI calculates the six-year dropout rate in the same manner as the four-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their six year. Staff members account for transfers-in and out during that sixth year as well.

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2008 Cohort Total}}$$

A building or district's cohort six-year graduation and dropout rates could be greater than, less than or equal to the cohort four-year rates. There are three reasons for this discrepancy: 1) count dates; 2) the numerator changes; and 3) the denominator changes.

Count dates impact the discrepancy between the four-year, five-year and six-year rates. Students who, in their sixth year, now meet the minimum count dates will be included in that district's and/or building's rates. For example, if a 2008 cohort student was at a building for one count date in the 2007-2008 school year, that student was counted in the district rate only. If, in the student's sixth year, that off-track student attended for another count date in the same building, that student is now reflected in the denominator of the building's six-year rates.

Table 8

Graduation and Dropout Rate Change Examples				
	4-Year Rate	5-Year Rate	Rate Change	Explanation
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students graduated in the sixth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)
	97%	99%	Increases	Off-track continuing students graduated in the sixth year
	97%	95%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the sixth year and are still continuing (increases the denominator)
Dropout Rate	5%	5%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students dropped out in the sixth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)
	5%	7%	Increases	Off-track continuing students dropped out in the sixth year

	5%	3%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the sixth year and did not drop out (increases the denominator) or former dropouts complete high school (decreases the numerator)
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Reading the 2008 cohort six-year graduation and dropout rate report

The 2008 cohort six-year graduation rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate, and is divided into eleven columns. The columns include:

Table 9

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of LEAs, then PSAs, and then ISDs. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students do roll up into the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2004	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth-graders in fall 2004, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2008 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the six-year period and remained.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who exited the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out of state, to nonpublic school or to home-school) Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2008 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track + Off-Track Graduated + Off-Track +5 Graduated	Total number of students in the 2008 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less, plus those who completed high school with a regular diploma in the sixth year.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the six-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER: missing expected records).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in six years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a General Educational Development (GED) or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated + Off-Track Graduated + Off-Track +5 Graduated divided by the 2008 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2008 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in six years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2008 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2008 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.